

# The College Board Review

NUMBER 16

NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 1952

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### Who Should Go to College in America

*Byron S. Hollinshead*

### Adventures of an Examiner in Language Testing

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OCT 27

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

## THE COLLEGE BOARD REVIEW

News and Research of the  
College Entrance Examination Board

Published three times a year by the  
College Entrance Examination Board  
425 West 117th Street, New York 27, N. Y.

Director . . . . . Frank H. Bowles

Secretary . . . . . William C. Fels

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## Multiple Choice

### Greek and Italian Tests

The head of our Ancient Languages Department has called to my attention the fact that steps are being taken to eliminate the Greek College Board Examination that has been given every year. May I, as the head master of the oldest public school in America, protest this proposed step.

In our school we are trying very hard to keep alive the great classical tradition. All our boys in the six year course have to take six years of Latin and they may elect three years of Greek. I have the feeling that if no College Board Examination is offered in Greek, boys will tend to drop Greek and elect another subject.

At the present time we have 119 boys taking Greek and it would grieve me very much to have a step taken that would cut down or eliminate entirely the number of our boys who elect Greek.

In my opinion, the pendulum that has been swinging away from the classical education is swinging back. For this reason it distresses me to see the College Entrance Examination Board adopt an action which gives joy to the enemies of the classics.

George L. McKim  
Head Master

Boston Latin School  
Boston, Mass.

It is regrettable that the examination in Italian will be discontinued due to the small number of candidates offering this language. I believe your decision is justified. May I add that you have been quite generous in giving the language ample time to earn a sufficient number of adherents.

We can only lament the fact that the language

will lose much of the prestige it had acquired from its inclusion in the College Entrance Examination Board tests. But one can hardly defend its retention as things are at present, or are likely to be in the near future.

Personally I shall miss the delightful associations I developed during the years I served on the committee. The annual meetings were a sort of Platonic banquet to which I looked forward with keen anticipation.

With my best wishes for the greater usefulness of the College Entrance Examination Board in the great task of educating our American youth.

Louis E. Sorieri

Chairman, Modern Language Department

New Utrecht High School  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

☉ In its meeting on October 31, the Board voted to discontinue test construction in Greek and Italian and to continue at the discretion of the Director the present forms and those under construction for at least two years. The Director stated that the matter would again be referred to the Board before tests in Greek and Italian would be dropped from the program. The number of candidates in the last three years has been:

	'48-'49	'49-'50	'50-'51
Greek	62	54	44
Italian	87	53	61

### The Thirteenth Labor

As one of those primarily concerned for several years with problems of college entrance, I should like to offer my warmest appreciation of the superb job that has been done in the preparation of your new *College Handbook*.

I have two copies, one of which I have deposited among other similar literature in our Sixth Form Room. To me it is an invaluable source of reference material, which will undoubtedly get more use than all the college catalogues on my shelf together. The Board is, I believe, to be congratulated on providing this practically gratuitous service which no other organization could possibly have furnished.

I have also been very much interested in two articles in the last [November] *College Board Review*. Mr. Eley's study promises progress along a familiar and important line. And the article by Mr. Dyer (an old teacher of mine, by the way) was fascinating in suggesting hints of things to come. You may be sure

(Continued on page 263)

## Midwest conference scheduled for admissions problems

School and college representatives will meet on March 22 in Winnetka, Illinois, for the second Midwest Regional Conference on College Admissions. The conference, sponsored by the Board, will be held at New Trier Township High School. Its superintendent, Matthew P. Gaffney, is chairman of the conference.

In the morning, the representatives will be addressed by Professor Edward S. Noyes, chairman of the board of admissions, Yale University, and Frank H. Bowles, director of the College Board. This part of the program will include a question and answer period to permit comment from the assembly on general problems in admissions.

The afternoon session will concentrate on particular subject areas, with six groups meeting simultaneously to discuss matters of common interest to schools and colleges in the fields of English, foreign languages, mathematics, social sciences, biological sciences, and physical sciences. Board examinations in each subject will be considered.

Schools and colleges interested in sending representatives to the conference may obtain complete information by writing to the secretary of the Board.

## Board publications considered by special committee

The possibility of changing certain Board publications to increase their usefulness and of planning new publications to serve areas in which information concerning the examinations would be welcome was explored on December 17 by an *ad hoc* committee which met in New York. Henry S. Dyer, director of the Office of Tests, Harvard University, acted as chairman.

Recommendations of the committee applied principally to the manuals on the use of the tests and the interpretation of test scores on

which Mr. Dyer is working as a Board consultant. It was suggested that the materials might be presented in form and content corresponding to the interests of several audiences of readers, such as, students, parents, and teachers; teachers and administrators; and administrators, counselors, and technicians.

Technical material now included in the *Annual Report* should be carried, as appropriate, in the new publications, it was agreed. Additional comment of the committee touched upon the *Bulletin of Information* and upon secondary channels through which information might be circulated in schools and colleges.

Committee members participating in the meeting were Miss Mary E. Chase, executive vice president and director of admissions, Wellesley College; Dr. Galen Jones, director of the Division of Secondary Education, United States Office of Education; Douglas V. McClane, director of admissions and registrar, Whitman College; and Professor Andrew H. MacPhail, director of educational measurement, Brown University.

## Thousand increase reported in preliminary candidates

Increasing numbers of students are taking the tests in their junior year of secondary school, according to a recent report. In 1950-51, there were 13,371 preliminary candidates, an increase of 1,090 over 1949-50. In 1949-50, a total of 12,281 had represented a rise of 690 over the preceding year.

Comparative numbers of preliminary candidates, by test series, for the last two years were as follows:

	1949-50	1950-51
December	28	40
January	134	220
March	2,321	2,626
May	9,377	10,133
August	421	352

## April 2 meeting to discuss problems, uses of tests

Two symposia on the use of examinations, a morning session on testing achievement and an afternoon discussion of the use of tests in admission, placement, and guidance, have been scheduled for the spring meeting of the Board at the Hotel Biltmore, New York City, on April 2.

A panel of specialists in examination will describe current problems in testing achievement, and comment on future possibilities in their fields. Members of the panel will be William W. Turnbull, vice president of the Educational Testing Service; Donald D. Walsh, chief examiner in Spanish; Raymond D. Douglass, chief examiner in mathematics; and Henry W. Bragdon, former chief examiner in social studies. A one-hour general discussion period will follow their talks.

The afternoon symposium will be opened by William C. Fels, secretary of the Board, who will speak on the influence of tests. A report on the practices and techniques of test use will be presented by Henry S. Dyer, Board consultant,

who recently completed a tour of visits to twenty-five colleges. The use of the tests from the viewpoint of a women's college will be explained by Miss Harriet Newhall, director of admissions, Mount Holyoke College, and from that of a men's college, by Eugene S. Wilson, Jr., director of admissions, Amherst College. A discussion period will conclude the meeting.

## Experimental form of GCT to be available to schools

A notice soon to be sent to schools will explain that an experimental form of the General Composition Test is to be made available this spring to those interested in using it.

One of the projects relating to the test authorized by the Board at its October meeting, the form may be administered by the schools for their own purposes. One or more copies of the test, as requested by them, will be provided, as well as an explanation of its reading and scoring.

Under the direction of Dr. Erle G. Eley, examiner in humanities at the University of

EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE																																															
STUD ID		NAME		SCHOOL CODE		COLLEGE CODE		APPL. COMM. SCORE		ACHIEVEMENT COMM. SCORE																																					
										VERB.		MATH.		ENG.		SOC. STUDIES		PHYSICS		CHEM.		LAT.		SPAN.		BIOL.		ECON.		POL.		SPAL. SCI.		HIST.-GEO.		AM. GOVT.		PSYCHOL. SCI.									
00000	000																																														



Chicago, the project is now in its second year. Aiming for a complete report to the Board at its fall meeting, those working on the examination are concentrating on validity and reliability studies, and are making plans for a second experimental administration in May.

### Eighty-two colleges to use May 19 acceptance date

Eighty-two colleges have notified the Board that they will observe May 19 as this year's uniform acceptance date.

By the terms of their agreement, the colleges have "bound themselves not to require any candidate admitted as a freshman to give notice before May 19, 1952, of his decision to attend one of these institutions or to accept financial aid from it."

The policy of setting such a date, inaugurated by Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale in 1948, is designed to provide the student maximum opportunity in choosing a college. It is emphasized, however, that the student may notify the institution before the date.

The number of colleges subscribing to the agreement was thirty-eight in 1949, sixty-two in 1950, and seventy-one in 1951. The acceptance date varies from year to year, its selection depending upon the date of the Board's spring examination series, which is March 15 this year.

### Bowles surveys troop education

A preliminary study of the armed services' information and education program was conducted by Board Director Frank H. Bowles during January at the request of the Ford Fund for the Advancement of Education. Suggested by the Department of Defense, the survey took Mr. Bowles to installations of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, where he observed the program before reporting on its methods and objectives.

### COLLEGES PARTICIPATING IN MAY 19 AGREEMENT

Adelphi College	Mount Holyoke College
Albertus Magnus College	Newcomb College of Tulane University
Bard College	New York University
Barnard College	New Jersey College for Women
Beaver College	Northwestern University
Bennington College	Occidental College
Boston University	Pembroke College in Brown University
Brown University	Pomona College
Bryn Mawr College	Princeton University
California Institute of Technology	Providence College
Catholic University of America	Radcliffe College
Claremont Men's College	Randolph-Macon Woman's College
College of Mount Saint Vincent*	Reed College
College of New Rochelle*	Regis College
College of Notre Dame of Maryland	Rosemont College*
College of William and Mary	Russell Sage College
Columbia University	Rutgers University
Connecticut College	St. Mary's College
The Cooper Union	Scripps College
Cornell University	Seton Hill College
Dartmouth College	Simmons College
Drew University	Skidmore College
Dunbarton College of Holy Cross	Smith College
Elmira College	Stanford University
Emmanuel College	Swarthmore College
The George Washington University	Sweet Briar College
Georgian Court College*	University of California
Gettysburg College	University of Chicago
Goucher College	University of Michigan
Harvard College	University of Pennsylvania
Hollins College	University of Virginia
Hood College	Vassar College
Immaculata College	Wagner College
Kalamazoo College	Washington and Jefferson College
Knox College*	Washington and Lee University
Lewis and Clark College	Wellesley College
Marymount College	Wells College
Marywood College	Western Reserve University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Wheaton College
Mills College	Whittier College
	Wilson College
	Yale University

\* Scholarship candidates not included.

# Member College Use of Board Tests

The chart at the right is based on information provided by the member colleges for the *College Handbook* and approved by them in February for presentation in this form.

It lists the Board's entire membership of 134 institutions and indicates their use of the morning (aptitude) and afternoon (achievement) test programs. The letters Y (Yes), C (Certain), and N (No), as more fully defined in the key at the bottom of the chart, show the degree of requirement which each college customarily attaches to Board tests in admission procedure and scholarship award consideration.

In those cases where tests are required, the chart does not explain which tests should be taken, nor does it note exceptions which may be made by the institutions in some instances. For more complete information of this kind, it is recommended that the college catalogue and the *Handbook* be consulted. Further advice of final authority should be requested of the proper college officer, as listed in the *Handbook*. Such sources will be necessary, in any event, for those colleges where Board tests are required or recommended only of certain applicants for admission or for scholarship use.

## SERIES REQUIREMENTS

Another factor which should be determined in the same way is the time, or times, at which the tests should be taken. In general, the colleges prefer that the Scholastic Aptitude Test be taken in the December, January, or March series. The March series is also satisfactory for the Achievement Tests, according to the *Handbook* statements of most of the colleges. When a student is applying to colleges which ask for different series, he can almost always arrive at a testing date acceptable to all by corresponding with their admissions offices.

## MEMBER COLLEGES OF THE COLLEGE BOARD

## Use of Test Programs

	Morning		Afternoon	
	Admis- sion	Scholar- ship	Admis- sion	Scholar- ship
Adelphi	C	N	C	N
Albertus Magnus	Y	Y	C	Y
Alfred	Y	Y	C	N
Amherst	Y	Y	Y	N
Bard	Y	Y	N	N
Barnard	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bates	Y	Y	C	C
Beaver	C	C	C	N
Beloit	C	N	C	N
Bennington	Y	Y	N	N
Boston U.	C	C	C	N
Bowdoin	Y	Y	C	N
Brown	Y	Y	N	N
Bryn Mawr	Y	Y	Y	N
Bucknell	Y	Y	Y	N
Cal. Inst. of Tech.	Y	Y	Y	Y
Carleton	Y	Y	Y	Y
Carnegie Inst. of Tech.	C	C	C	C
Catholic U. of America	Y	Y	C	N
Cedar Crest	Y	Y	N	N
Chestnut Hill	Y	Y	N	Y
Claremont Men's	C	C	N	N
Clark	C	N	C	N
Colby	Y	Y	C	Y
Colgate	Y	Y	C	N
Col. of Mt. St. Vincent	Y	Y	Y	Y
Col. of New Rochelle	Y	Y	Y	Y
Col. of Notre Dame, Md.	Y	Y	N	Y
Col. of Wm. and Mary	C	C	N	C
Col. of Wooster	N	Y	N	N
Columbia	Y	Y	Y	Y
Connecticut Col.	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cooper Union (day)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cornell	Y	Y	C	N
Dartmouth	Y	Y	N	N
Denison	C	Y	N	Y
Dickinson	C	C	N	N
Drew	Y	Y	C	N
Duke	C	C	C	C
Dunbarton	Y	Y	N	N
Elmira	C	N	N	N
Emmanuel	Y	Y	Y	Y
Emory	C	N	C	N
Franklin and Marshall	C	Y	C	Y
George Washington	C	N	C	N
Georgetown	Y	Y	Y	Y
Georgian Court	Y	Y	Y	N
Gettysburg	C	N	C	N
Goucher	Y	Y	Y	Y
Grinnell	C	C	N	C
Hamilton	Y	Y	N	N

MEMBER COLLEGES OF THE COLLEGE BOARD	Use of Test Programs				MEMBER COLLEGES OF THE COLLEGE BOARD	Use of Test Programs			
	<i>Morning</i>		<i>Afternoon</i>			<i>Morning</i>		<i>Afternoon</i>	
	Admis- sion	Scholar- ship	Admis- sion	Scholar- ship		Admis- sion	Scholar- ship	Admis- sion	Scholar- ship
Harvard	Y	Y	Y	Y	Rutgers	Y	Y	N	N
Haverford	Y	Y	Y	Y	St. Lawrence	Y	Y	N	N
Hobart and Wm. Smith	Y	Y	N	C	St. Mary's, Notre Dame	Y	Y	Y	N
Hollins	Y	Y	N	Y	Scripps	Y	Y	C	N
Hood	Y	Y	N	N	Seton Hill	C	Y	N	N
Immaculata	Y	Y	N	Y	Simmons	Y	Y	C	N
Kalamazoo	N	Y	N	N	Skidmore	Y	Y	N	N
Kenyon	C	C	C	C	Smith	Y	Y	Y	Y
Knox	C	N	N	N	Stanford	Y	Y	N	N
Lafayette	C	N	N	N	Swarthmore	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lake Forest	C	N	C	N	Sweet Briar	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lehigh	Y	Y	Y	Y	Syracuse	Y	Y	Y	N
Lewis and Clark	C	C	N	N	Trinity (Hartford)	Y	Y	N	N
Manhattanville	Y	Y	Y	Y	Trinity (Washington)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Marymount	Y	Y	C	Y	Tufts	Y	Y	C	C
Marywood	Y	Y	Y	Y	Union	Y	Y	C	C
Mass. Inst. of Tech.	Y	Y	Y	Y	U. of California	C	N	C	N
Middlebury	Y	Y	C	N	U. of Chicago	C	C	C	C
Mills	Y	Y	N	N	U. of Denver	C	C	N	N
Mount Holyoke	Y	Y	Y	Y	U. of Massachusetts	C	N	C	N
Muhlenberg	Y	Y	N	Y	U. of Michigan	N	N	N	N
N. J. Col. for Women	Y	Y	C	C	U. of Notre Dame	N	Y	N	Y
New York U.	C	N	C	N	U. of Pennsylvania	Y	Y	Y	Y
Newark Col. of Engr.	C	N	N	N	U. of Rochester	Y	Y	N	N
Newcomb	Y	Y	N	Y	U. of So. California	C	N	C	N
Northwestern	C	C	N	N	U. of Virginia	C	N	C	N
Oberlin	N	N	N	N	U. of Washington	C	N	C	N
Occidental	C	C	N	N	Ursinus	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ohio Wesleyan	C	N	C	N	Vassar	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pembroke	Y	Y	C	N	Wagner	C	N	N	N
Penn. Col. for Women	C	C	C	N	Washington and Jeff.	C	N	N	N
Pomona	Y	Y	N	N	Washington and Lee	Y	Y	C	N
Princeton	Y	Y	Y	Y	Wellesley	Y	Y	Y	Y
Providence	Y	Y	N	N	Wells	C	C	C	C
Radcliffe	Y	Y	Y	Y	Wesleyan	Y	Y	Y	Y
Randolph-Macon					Western Reserve	C	C	N	N
Woman's Col.	Y	Y	C	Y	Wheaton	Y	Y	Y	Y
Reed	Y	Y	N	N	Whitman	Y	Y	N	N
Regis	Y	Y	N	Y	Whittier	C	Y	N	N
Rensselaer	Y	Y	C	C	Williams	Y	Y	N	N
Rosemont	Y	Y	C	Y	Wilson	Y	Y	Y	Y
Russell Sage	C	C	N	N	Yale	Y	Y	Y	Y

#### Explanation of Symbols

Y (Yes) — Required of all candidates for admission (when in Admission column); required of all applicants for scholarship (when in Scholarship column).  
C (Certain) — Required or recommended of certain candidates for admission (when in Admission col-

umn); required or recommended of certain applicants for scholarships (when in Scholarship column).  
N (No) — Not used in admission (when in Admission column); not used in scholarship award consideration (when in Scholarship column).

# Who Should Go to College in America

—Byron S. Hollinshead

*Do most of the top-notch students go to college? Yes. Do all of ability go who should? No. The difference is about 450,000 students; the cost would be \$225 million in scholarship aid.*

The subject of human resources has only recently begun to interest our policy and law makers. It first came into sharp focus at the beginning of World War II when it was suddenly observed that there were not enough people of trained talents to meet the various needs of what came to be called "total war." In husbanding and developing its manpower resources during the war period, the United States did not display as much wisdom as many of its allies and enemies. To a degree, we have been trained to be profligate with all of our resources, so the fact that we were profligate with this one was not surprising.

In the same way, the subject of who goes to college has not bothered us as much as it should have. We have run the danger, to use the words of the National Council of Independent Schools, that in too many cases the colleges deal with students "whose chief spiritual staff is a silver spoon and whose main intellectual reliance is a successful ancestor."

Neither the schools nor colleges play their proper role when their effect is to freeze social stratification. Their role is to keep society fluid. Since one of the chief means of social mobility or fluidity is provided by education, and since, in the professional spheres at least, this now means higher education, the opportunity for such education should be available to all those who can profit by it. This principle, which is profoundly and uniquely American, represents the philosophical basis for our study of the college population.

There are a number of questions which the

report, "Who Should Go to College in America," attempts to answer in rather broad terms: What aspects of the present educational scene either encourage or discourage the desire for higher education? Who now goes to college? What determines actual college attendance? Who does not go to college but should have the opportunity? What financing is needed to permit a larger proportion of the high ability group to go to college? What proposals or recommendations can be made which would safeguard the present structure of higher education, yet encourage more of the able students to attend?

I think no one can give precise answers to these questions since imponderables are involved in each of them. Even the study itself, of about 200 pages, does not answer these questions in great detail, nor does it pretend to answer any of them with exactness. Present knowledge does not permit more than approximations.

In this discussion, I want to limit myself to four questions which are more sharply focused parts of these larger topics. This will allow me to give in broad outline the central problem which engages us.

*What proportion of our young people should the four-year college attempt to educate?*

One can, of course, make this proportion as large or as small as one wishes. The President's Commission on Higher Education said that 32 per cent of the population were capable of profiting from a four-year college course, and they based this assumption on the fact that some



young people in the lower ranges of this top third do succeed in graduating from college. Since only about half of our young people graduate from high school, what the President's Commission was saying was that the upper two-thirds of high school graduates have the capacity to profit from a four-year college course. The Commission went further to say that half the entire age group could profit from a two-year college course. Since only half the age group now graduate from high school, this would mean, of course, that all high school graduates had the capacity to profit from some type of two-year college course.

The proportion we have settled on as having a reasonable chance of success in a four-year college is somewhat smaller than the proportion set by the President's Commission. Our reasons for picking the proportion we do are almost purely experiential. The average intelligence quotient of college seniors is about 115. This figure seems to represent the average required for college graduation. It is the figure which is equated with a passing mark of 70 on the draft deferment test. If this represents the average ability of seniors, what is a figure for freshmen, below which there is a poor chance of graduation from college and above which there is a reasonably good chance? We set 110 IQ\* as this mark, since at this point there is only about a one in three chance that the individual will graduate from college if he enters. These figures are based on studies by the Commission on Human Resources and Advanced Training.

Further, the Armed Services, in their selection of candidates for officer training, have used 110 Army General Classification Test as a lower score limit. While 110 AGCT is about equivalent to 108 IQ, there is some selection even in the group taking the AGCT, so we have thought that the two figures could be considered as roughly equivalent. Also, most college admis-

sions officers have set 110 IQ as a lower limit for admission to college, and we have assumed that such a practice resulted from long experience in trying to forecast reasonable probability of college success.

We know, of course, that many colleges have standards of admission higher than this, and some have lower standards. We know also that the ability required for graduation from one college is far different from the ability required for graduation from another. However, our figure of a lower limit of 110 IQ seems to be the most reasonable we could discover, and it is set low enough to take into account the vast differences in academic attitude and perseverance, as well as mental capacity, which affect college success. In other words, it seems to be a fair lower limit if one is to consider the calculated risk which society and philanthropy must take in helping young persons to go to college. This does not suggest that young people below this level of ability be denied admission to college. It does suggest that they are not a good societal risk, and if they do go, the risk should be their own.

Proportionate to the population, those who have an IQ of 110 or higher are slightly more than 25 per cent of all. Therefore, we have thought that the group which society would benefit by encouraging to take a four-year college course could be properly denominated as the upper quarter of the college age population. Since about half the age group finish high school, and since most of these upper quarter students are in the category of high school graduates, the group I am defining, therefore, consists roughly of the top half of high school graduates.

*What percentage of this group are we actually educating?*

I think no answer to this question could have been even approximate before the Commission

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\* May I say parenthetically that I use the letters "IQ" simply as a symbol to indicate levels of academic ability. All of us are agreed that there are gradations in ability and that those who have intelligence above a certain level have a better chance for college success. I am using IQ only as a convenient expression.

on Human Resources began its work. In the interests of simplicity, I am fractionalizing the answers because this method may stick in the mind better.

Of the upper quarter of the age group in ability, we learned from studies made in 1945-46 that about one-fifth do not finish high school. We also know from the records of the AGCT of World War II that about two-fifths of the upper quarter finish high school and go to college. This would mean that in the upper quarter group about two-fifths finish high school but do not go to college.

However, there is reason to beware of these figures because our school and college enrollment statistics are far from static and figures which apply in one year are changed in another. For readily apparent reasons having to do with the war, it is almost impossible to attach any certain meanings to college enrollment figures from 1941 to 1951. High school enrollment figures were also affected somewhat during this period, but not enough to interfere in any serious way with what seems to be their normal trend.

What is this normal trend? Allowing for some minor ups and downs, the proportion of pupils graduating from high school during this period increased by about .75 per cent each year. This proportionate increase is very significant, as it of course means that over this 10-year period the proportion of the age group finishing high school was increased by about 7.5 per cent. Assuming that a proportionate change was affecting the upper quarter group we have been trying to isolate (and this assumption certainly seems conservative), we can postulate that the upper group who did not finish high school was probably reduced to slightly less than one-fifth. Further, by the same reasoning we can assume that the upper quarter group who finished high school and went to college became slightly more than two-fifths, and that those who finished high school but did not go to college was diminished somewhat from 40 per cent. Such very recent data as we have been able to get seem to

support these assumptions about the trend.

You may be interested to know, purely for comparative purposes, how much of the present college enrollment is made up of this upper quarter group. Assuming that the proportions are the same as in the early 1940's, roughly one-half of the students now in college have IQ's of 110 or higher. About half have IQ's of 110 or lower. We know that most of our college drop-outs come from the lower group. Furthermore, this lower half is concentrated in certain types of institutions such as, junior colleges (especially in their terminal course divisions), agricultural colleges, normal schools (especially in courses preparing for elementary school teaching) and in Negro colleges. In the case of Negro colleges, the poor performance of students on national tests is largely a result of the poverty of their educational and cultural environment.

The college drop-out rate nation-wide is about 50 per cent; less than one-half of those who enter the colleges as freshmen remain to graduate. That careful selection has a great deal to do with the drop-out rate is shown by the experience of some colleges which admit only those having IQ's of 115 or over and whose loss by drop-out is only one-fifth of those who enter. On the other side, some colleges lose two-thirds of those who enter even though their academic standards are lower than those which graduate four-fifths of their entering freshmen.

*What are the actual numbers involved in the upper quarter group who do not now go to college but who might be induced to go?*

The present age group of eighteen-year-olds is about 2,100,000. This means that in the upper quarter we have been discussing, there are 525,000 young people. Since space is limited, I do not think it would serve any useful purpose if I went through the fairly intricate calculations by which we estimated that about 150,000 of the top quarter group who do not now go to college might be induced to go if they were guided and financed. They consist of the groups which

are presently unfinanced, unmotivated, or have "other plans." If they were added to the present total college population, they would increase it by about 450,000, or approximately one-third. They would increase the proportion of upper quarter students now going to college by about 25 percentage points. That is, we should then have around 70 per cent of our upper ability students in college rather than the slightly above 40 per cent which we now have. Presumably, we could hope that in the future we might increase this percentage to well over 70 per cent.

Actually, it is not quite accurate to say that this group would be directly comparable to the top talent now in college. At present, the colleges are getting a very high percentage of the very top talent, around 90 per cent of those in the top 2 per cent, over two-thirds of those in the top 10 per cent. Nevertheless, of the human assets represented by the top quarter, slightly less than half now benefit from higher education, and such a situation constitutes a loss of a very important national resource for which there is a social need.

This need is obvious in several spheres. Perhaps the most obvious at the moment is for a larger number of technically trained people. But at least equally insistent is the need for an enlargement of those we might call the liberal and rational element in the population. Since much of our common life is governed by popular opinion, we have much to gain by an improvement of the quality of that opinion.

*What measures are necessary to get more of our able group to go to college?*

First, we need to have a larger concern than we now have for the early identification of academic talent. In the past, we have thought of this as in large measure a responsibility of the high schools. In part, such a judgment may be true if we include the junior high schools. In our system, many of the decisions which relate to college going have to be made around the time of the eighth grade when the youngster



The absence of a question mark in the title of Byron S. Hollinshead's forthcoming book, *Who Should Go to College in America*, does not mean that he knows all the answers, the author explains. The question, asked by Dr. John D. Millett of the Commission on Financing Higher Education, began a year-long study conducted by Dr. Hollinshead under the auspices of the Board. The above discussion of the principal findings, as recently reported to the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, will be supplemented soon by the book, to be published for the Commission by Columbia University Press.

decides which high school curriculum he is going to take. We have not had, at that point, as much information as we should have had for guidance purposes. The Educational Testing Service is just now beginning to prepare a set of "Tests of Important Educational Objectives" to range from the fourth grade up. The results of these tests, when they are available, should help us in the difficult problems of proper guidance and identification in the early school years.

Next, there should be more direct concern than there now is to prevent students of high ability from leaving school. About 20 per cent of all students leave at the eighth grade level and about 40 per cent altogether are gone by the end of the tenth grade. This grade level corresponds with age 16, the legal time to leave in most states. To be sure, most of those who leave are low ability students, but among their numbers are about one-fifth of the top quarter students. Some of these top quarter students leave because they lack financial help. All of them need advice and encouragement of one kind or another if they are to stay.

An important phase of such identification and guidance concerns the willingness of the schools so to differentiate their academic work as to challenge the abilities and aptitudes of the academically gifted. In this connection, we are impressed by the recommendations of the Educational Policies Commission which suggest

acceleration, grouping, enrichment and special elective courses for superior pupils.

When we get to the college stage, the problem of financing becomes a very large one. The present college scholarship resources of about 25 million dollars per year are inadequate, and it is doubtful whether these funds are now being used to bring to college very many young people who would not otherwise have attended some college. In part, these funds are used to stimulate admissions to a particular college; in part, they are used to stimulate attendance on the part of those who excel in certain outside activities, such as catching passes of the pigskin. In some cases they are used to make up a small financial difference which enables a student to attend one college rather than another, and in others they are used to keep students at college who might otherwise withdraw. One cannot quarrel with these purposes, but the observation may certainly be made that present scholarship funds do not attract many students to college who would not have gone somewhere anyway. It may also be said that the size of present scholarship funds is but a fraction of what is needed.

#### \$225 MILLION NEEDED

On the amount needed, we have already estimated that there are about 450,000 students of high ability, in addition to and outside of the regular college group, who might be induced to attend college if they could be financed. While this figure cannot be exact, it does give us a basis for estimating. If this group is to attend college, we believe that they will need assistance in an average amount of around \$500 per year. This is \$225 million per year. The question is, where is this amount of money to be obtained and how can it be obtained without interfering with our present system of dual control, public and private, and also without interfering with the present diversity and spread of institutions which helps to insure academic freedom.

Answers to the question of how to remedy inequality of educational opportunity are many

and varied. The three chief ones seem to summarize briefly as follows:

1. Let us enlarge the number who go to college, and let us expand college facilities by doubling them. In brief, this is the answer of the President's Commission.
2. Let higher education function as it has in the past. It has done pretty well, and we do not want to run the risk of political or other control.
3. Let us remedy gross inequalities by some system of scholarships but let us avoid outside control either public or private as much as possible.

Which one of these positions the individual takes probably represents, in part at least, an affirmation of his social or political beliefs. Here I confess to being a middle-of-the-roader, a position attractive to brickbats from both sides. However, I never could detect any improper control in the GI Bill or in the NYA college program. I did think the guidance to GI's given by the veterans' advisement centers was unwise on occasion, but then I am not sure that college people themselves always give good advice. In fact it may be that college students, like the rest of us, have to learn to endure the peril of poor advice. It is clear, of course, that the giving of government scholarships should be safeguarded to avoid control, but as in the case of the GI Bill, I believe this is possible.

#### SOURCES OF SUPPORT

On the private philanthropy side, we have not explored sufficiently the possibility of large gifts by corporations to meet the need for scholarships. The annual net income of corporations is now around 50 billion dollars. Of this sum corporations are permitted to make charitable gifts of up to 5 per cent before computing taxes. If they give away this 5 per cent, they would have available for annual gifts 2½ billion dollars. The scholarship needs I have spoken of could be met by about 10 per cent of this sum, and in most cases the government would actually be paying for over half the gift. In all cases, the government would be paying at least 47 per cent of it.

These two possibilities, national scholarships



and corporation scholarships, are the two large sources to meet the need I have described. Of course there are innumerable other possibilities. There are possibilities of additional scholarships from public sources which might come from local and state tax units. On the private giving side, there are additional possibilities from individuals, organizations of all kinds, and foundations. The giving of scholarships of all types can and should be increased, but, to repeat, the two large possibilities for sizable increases seem to be the national government and corporations.

#### EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

The startling promise of our democracy is that within limits it will provide equality of educational opportunity. While we have never been able to carry out this promise to the letter, we have gone a long way in removing inequalities which were visible or glaring. Not in any age nor in any other country has top talent had as generous an opportunity as in America. Yet, even we are not doing as much as we might.

It seems to me that it is important to focus interest on our undeveloped talent resources for several reasons. In so far as it is possible, we ought to carry out our democratic promise of equality. We ought to do this not merely because talented young people would gain self-satisfaction by better educational opportunity but also because in any state of our society which seems likely in the future, war or peace, we shall desperately need more young people who have technical competence and broad social understanding.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF TALENT

Now may I conclude by recapitulating with great directness what I have been trying to say. For reasons which seem to us valid (the "us" refers to the staff who helped in the study and not to the Commission on Financing Higher Education), we thought the upper quarter to be the group who represent a good risk for the four-year college course. They constitute the group who, by and large, have some chance of going

on into one of the professions.

We think measures should be taken to identify this group in the elementary school years and that most of them should be guided and helped in high school to plan to go to college. We believe that their academic work in the elementary and high school grades should be differentiated from that of other students so that they either finish the same work more rapidly or they are expected to accomplish more.

According to the best information we can develop, about one-fifth of our top quarter students do not finish high school, slightly less than two-fifths do finish high school but do not go to college. Slightly more than two-fifths finish high school and go to college.

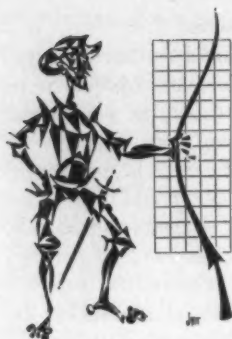
We believe that a scholarship plan which was national in scope and which operated outside the colleges might attract another fifth of the top quarter to go to college. In figures this would amount to an increase of about 150,000 to the present size of the freshman class. This would add about one-third to total college enrollment.

#### A NATIONAL PLAN

We believe the best way to attract this group would be a national plan which would include an enlargement of present sources of scholarship funds. But since most of these sources seem inadequate, even if further developed, we believe that attention should be given to the possibility of developing and enlarging national government and corporation scholarships on a broad scale. We believe the chief criteria for the award of such scholarships should be ability and need, and we think students who might get such awards should be free both to choose the college they wish to attend and the subjects they wish to study.

Action on such a program would help to equalize educational opportunity and it would help to meet what seem to be the very real needs of our society for an ever larger proportion of citizens who have technical knowledge and a rational, humane understanding of the structure and requirements of a free society.





*Though you flourish as many arms as did the giant Briareus,  
you still shall have to answer to me.* DON QUIXOTE

## Adventures of an Examiner in Language Testing

—Donald D. Walsh

A year ago, the College Board decided to publish, in the *Bulletin of Information* sent out to all students planning to take College Board tests, the names of the members of the various committees of examiners. Up to then our identity had been a fairly well guarded secret, since our names appeared only in the annual reports sent to headmasters and other administrators whose interest in the tests, though genuine, was somewhat generalized.

But with the publication of the names of the committee members, and of my name as chairman of the Spanish committee, I have begun to receive from secondary school teachers a steady trickle of letters that express bewilderment, skepticism, and even indignation about the Spanish Reading Test. "Why doesn't the College Board sell copies of old tests, as it used to?" "Where do you get such hard words? They are not in any of the textbooks we use." "Why don't you add at least one question to the test that will give the student a chance to show that he can write Spanish?" "The test seems to me nothing but a guessing game, and a moderately bright student ought to do well even if he knows no Spanish at all."

I have been connected with the College Board Spanish tests as reader or examiner since 1940, which carries me back to the "good old days" of the three-hour June examination and the gathering of readers—all three of us—in New York. Before that I had spent fifteen years preparing

pupils for Board examinations, so that my knowledge of and interest in them is reasonably extensive. I confess that the success of my students with the new test is not so uniform as in the old days, a testimonial not only to my honesty but also to the increased effectiveness of the new test in separating the sheep from the goats.

### SUCCESS WITH THE GOATS

I used to have such success with the goats, and it was fun to triumph over nature and the Spanish examiners by winning a 60 for a student who knew shockingly little about the Spanish language—but it wasn't really education, and the goats were not, despite the temporary magic of a College Board passing grade, converted into acceptable Spanish students.

One of the doubts implicit in the letters I have been receiving is about the possibility of testing a student thoroughly by means of a one-hour objective test "where all they have to do is write the numbers 1 to 5," as compared with the old three-hour test. What was the old test like? It was originally almost entirely translation—from Spanish to English and from English to Spanish—plus an original composition, more or less controlled, for the advanced students. About 1935, reading passages with comprehension questions were introduced, then "fill-in" exercises, and still later, multiple-choice vocabulary tests.

The new test is entirely multiple-choice: 140

questions to answer in an hour. Teachers whose students take College Board tests have probably seen a sample of the various types of questions: vocabulary, questions on syntax or usage, tested by an English sentence or phrase with four Spanish translations, and reading passages with comprehension questions and with italicized words or expressions for which the student is to choose the best translation in context.

What caused the change to the new type of test? The immediate cause was Pearl Harbor. But the beginning was made in 1937, when a special set of tests was prepared for the use of scholarship candidates. For these candidates, college plans hinged on financial aid, and they needed to know as soon as possible about their scholarship awards. The June tests (and the July reports on them) came too late for this purpose, so scholarship candidates were asked to take a special set of April tests and also the regular June examinations for admission to college. Since teachers could not be brought to New York to read papers in April, as they could at the close of the school year in June, the April tests could not be of the traditional type. So multiple-choice objective tests were prepared, which could be scored by clerks and machines.

A college entrance test tries to rate students according to their knowledge of the subject and their fitness to do college work in it. This is its sole function, and its merit is determined by the degree to which it can predict college success—a

degree which must always fall far short of perfection, since college students are human (some of them all too), and their success in college depends partly on social adjustments to college life. But these obstacles to perfect predictability would exist whatever were the academic bases for selecting students.

From 1937 to 1941 the colleges that used both the scholarship tests in April and the June examinations of the College Board had an excellent opportunity to compare the two tests in their ability to predict college success. The students who took both sets were, of course, a superior group, applicants for scholarships, but for this group the colleges discovered that the one-hour test was as valid a prognosis as the three-hour test.

With the outbreak of the second World War and the accelerated summer term for freshmen it was obvious that the traditional week of three-hour examinations could not be held in June, 1942; the freshmen would have been half through their first term before the results of the examinations were reported to the colleges. So in 1942 additional copies of the scholarship tests were printed, and they were given in April to all College Board candidates. And the college officials discovered during the war years that the one-hour tests were even more valid for the whole group of candidates than they had been for the superior group of scholarship candidates.

From the administrative point of view there are several advantages to the new tests. Since the whole set can be given on a single Saturday morning and afternoon, candidates who live at some distance from an examination center will have to travel only for the one-day program. The new tests cost much less to administer and to score, and this means a lower examination fee. Since their scoring does not require (except in English) teachers with a knowledge of the subject matter, they can be administered in March or April and the results reported to the colleges in time for them to accept or reject candidates during the late spring.

This is an incalculable advantage to the can-



As Donald D. Walsh says above, he has been helping the Board separate sheep from goats for a long time, now as chief examiner in Spanish. He is head of the Spanish Department and Assistant Director of Studies at The Choate School, Wallingford, Connecticut. Extracurricularly, he is the editor of *Hispania*, the journal of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese from which (November, 1951, issue) this article is reprinted. Mr. Walsh will take up his shepherd's crook again in a talk on the Board's language tests at the meeting in New York at the Hotel Biltmore on April 2.

didates, in comparison with the former time schedule, which kept applicants waiting for the news until mid-summer. Now a candidate who is accepted can plan his summer on the basis of this comforting knowledge, and a candidate rejected at one college still can seek elsewhere.

These we might call external advantages, and they are matched by internal and intrinsic superiorities. The old uncertainty of an easy or hard examination has disappeared. All scores are converted to scaled scores that show a candidate's skill as judged, not by a necessarily arbitrary and subjective standard, but by his rank in competition with all the other candidates.

#### SCORES BY STUDY YEARS

In the foreign languages, where students with two, three, and four years of preparation take the same test, college admissions officials can judge each candidate's score in the light of the number of years he has studied the language. The average score for two-year candidates has been found to be 460, the third-year average, 520, and the fourth-year average, 580. In tests like the Scholastic Aptitude Test, taken by the whole group of candidates rather than by a special subject-matter group, the average is 500.

These are not "passing" grades, but middle scores. There are no longer any passing grades. The range of possible scores is from a high of 800 to a low of 200, as in the scaling of all other Board achievement tests and the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Admissions officials at each college establish their own standards of acceptable scores.

To aid us in preparing each new test, we have the expert advice of the Educational Testing Service and the enormous quantities of data that they have assembled on preceding tests: the difficulty and reliability of the whole test, of each section of the test, and of each of the 140 items. The item analysis is amazingly thorough. We can find out what percentage of the candidates chose the right answer to any question, and also what percentage chose each of the wrong answers. We can also find out the ability, in terms

of their scores on the whole test, of each of the right and wrong groups.

A wrong answer that is chosen by an abler group than the group that chooses the right answer is obviously not a good wrong answer, and study of the statistical analyses of previous tests helps to prevent us from devising lures that trap only students bright enough to know what we were thinking of when we set the trap.

This is all very well, you may say, but how can a one-hour objective test rate a candidate according to all the skills we teachers have tried to teach him? How can it test his aural-oral ability, his skill in writing correct Spanish, his appreciation of literature, his understanding of and sympathy with Hispanic culture and ways of life? Isn't the Spanish Reading Test forcing a reading objective which many reject?

The College Board Spanish test is admittedly only a sampling of the candidates' skill, but as we have seen, it is an effective and valid sampling, as judged by their subsequent success in college courses of all types.

The aural-oral skills are those least adequately tested, and the practical obstacles to adequate testing are at present insuperable. If the candidates are to be tested on their ability to understand spoken Spanish, they must all hear not only the same text but the same voice speaking the text at the same speed and with the same pronunciation and intonation. A dictation or a set of oral questions with written answers could therefore be given only by means of a recording or a nation-wide radio broadcast, and only if the acoustics of the room and the quality of the equipment, phonograph or radio, were uniform in each examination center.

The practical obstacles to an oral test are even greater. If all candidates are to make oral answers to the same oral questions—the only sure way of reaching uniformity of testing—this can be done only by means of a record that contains the questions, followed by blank grooves on which the candidate records his answers. All this recording would have to be done simultaneously, to prevent news of the questions from

spreading from one candidate to the next. We would therefore have to provide each candidate with a recording machine and a microphone of uniform quality, plus a separate room.

Even if these fantastic difficulties were overcome, the candidates would have mike-fright to add to their other emotional tensions, and we would need the services in April of a group of Spanish-speaking listeners able to apply uniform standards of scoring to the recordings. I shudder at the thought of trying to establish and maintain such standards. Advocates of the aural-oral approach state that by the end of the second year students taught by their method have equalled or surpassed in all skills students taught by other methods. There is therefore no reason to feel that the aural-oral students suffer from any handicap in taking the present test.

Within the framework of a written test, we do what we can to stress elements that would be present in aural-oral work. We select reading passages that contain idiomatic dialogue and choose words and constructions with a thought to their frequency and importance in the spoken language. We are preparing a new section, to appear for the first time in 1953, which will test the student's knowledge of what to say in the common social situations.

Literary appreciation is not easy to achieve by the end of three or even four years of second-

ary-school Spanish, and it is no easier to evaluate. We may be sure, however, that it depends upon reading skill, which is something that we can evaluate with demonstrable success. And we could quite easily test the students' knowledge of Hispanic culture also, if there were any commonly accepted body of information which formed part of every student's course. But of course there is no such common acceptance. We have merely to pose the question, shall the "cultural" items be about Spain or Spanish America?

#### SELECTING CULTURAL ITEMS

With the present lack of uniformity in our secondary school teaching, there are very few cultural items that could be safely included. Could we, for example, expect your students to know even such "obvious" facts as that the Alhambra is in Granada, that Burgos was the birthplace of the Cid, that Lope de Vega was a famous dramatist, and that Espronceda was a Romantic poet? Or that Florencio Sánchez was a Uruguayan dramatist, and that Ricardo Palma invented the *Tradición*.

It has been said that the test is too hard, and that it is unfair to ask second-year students to take the same test as more advanced students. Since the raw scores are converted to scores on a uniform scale, the test cannot be hard or easy in the usual sense of having a smaller or larger percentage of the students receive passing or honor grades. The test would be too hard only if the questions were so difficult that candidates were discouraged at the outset and failed to do their best. Against this we guard constantly, being guided by the exhaustive reports on tests of the previous year, which tell us not only how hard the test was, but how "long" it was, what per cent of the candidates finished all 140 items and what per cent dropped out at each item.

As to the "unfairness" of subjecting all candidates to the same test, there is a surprising overlap of scores, the superior second-year students scoring well above the third-year median, and the less able third-year students scoring well below the second-year median. Language learning



*Aural-oral obstacles are . . . insuperable*



is a continuous process, and the College Board test, by arranging the items in each part in order of difficulty, gives the superior student a chance to show his superiority by working through the whole set, including difficult questions. It also—and this is no less important—encourages the less able third and fourth-year students by starting them off with easy questions.

It has also been said that objective tests are mere guessing games and speed tests, and that the conscientious plodder who really knows a lot of Spanish doesn't get a fair chance to show what he knows. It is true that such tests favor the boy who is bright and quick, but these are highly desirable qualities for college students, and the plodder will plod faster if he knows more Spanish, while the nimble brain innocent of Spanish will have to be very brainy to guess correctly such items as: 1) *inn: sudor; verdugo; fondo; presa; venta*; 2) *groan: menguar; moler; gemir; rugir; erguir*; or 3) *Nobody said anything: Nadie dijo nada; Nadie no dijo algo; Nadie dijo cualquier cosa; Nadie no dijo nada.*

#### WHICH ARE EASY WORDS?

Where do we get our words and passages, and how do we decide which are the easy ones? Our basic source for vocabulary is the Buchanan Word List, in which words are arranged in the order of their frequency in a variety of reading sources, mostly literary. We vary the order of words, depending on their frequency in other phases of Spanish study: words like *alumno*, *nota*, *lápiz*, *tiza*, for example, would be easier than their frequency would indicate.

The reading passages are chosen from our own reading and searching. This is by far the hardest part of the test to prepare, since each passage must furnish five suitable questions and five words or expressions whose meaning shall, if possible, be affected by the context, so that we may test the candidate's exactness and acuteness in reading. For each test, we prepare far more material than we can use and exchange the material a month or more before our meeting, so that when we come together, each of us has ar-



*The mystery that surrounds the tests . . .*

ranged all the material in order of difficulty and preference and we can reach an agreement as to what to include and where to place each item.

I should perhaps explain, at this point, who "we" are. Each committee of examiners has five members, usually three college teachers, one public school teacher, and one private school teacher. The committees are not permanent, nor are they self-perpetuating. At irregular intervals examiners are retired and new examiners appointed by the Board. Professor Edith Helman of Simmons College was chairman of the Spanish Committee in the 1940's and among many other American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese members who have served on the committee are Henry Grattan Doyle, Lincoln Canfield, Naomi Johnson, Graydon De Land, Milan La Du, and E. H. Hespelt. At present, the other four examiners are Professor Lomas Barrett\* of Washington and Lee University, Professor Amelia Del Río of Barnard College, Professor Rose Martin of Middlebury College, and Mrs. Naomi Zieber of the Philadelphia High School for Girls.

The test is not fixed in a permanent mold. The old three-hour test changed form and em-

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\* With the expiration of his term as a committee member in December, Professor Barrett has been succeeded by Professor Frederick B. Agard of Cornell University.



phasis to meet changing requirements, and the present test is also subject to change. We are planning new sections in the 1953 test that will increase the emphasis on direct-method testing and on the vocabulary needed for an active command of Spanish.

The mystery that shrouds the tests, both before and after they are administered, is due to two considerations, one theoretical and one practical. We believe that the tests ought to be taken in stride, not crammed for. The best way to prepare students for the vocabulary and reading parts of the test is to teach them to read, not to have them study lists of words or practice taking tests on reading passages, for example.

An additional reason for keeping previous College Board tests out of circulation is that the reliability of each new test is heightened by the inclusion of a few items of proven degree of difficulty and reliability drawn from each of several preceding tests. The proportion is not large, and a student would have had to study a large number of old tests to raise his score notably, but in view of our theoretical objection to cramming, it has seemed wise to keep the tests from the eyes of over-zealous students and teachers.

#### TRY ONE YOURSELF

If you doubt the ability of a multiple-choice objective test to distinguish the sheep from the goats, I suggest that you prepare one and compare the results with those obtained from your usual tests. It will take a good deal longer to prepare, of course, weeks of effort instead of hours, but the result should be a test that will evaluate your students' knowledge with surprising justice and accuracy.

A final and interrelated pair of objections to answer, and I am done. Some teachers have felt that the present test forces upon them the reading objective, now viewed in some quarters with grave suspicion, while others bemoan the absence of the old June examinations, a goal toward which the whole year's work could be pointed, and feel that there is now a let-down after the College Board tests in the spring.

Though the test is called "Spanish Reading Test," it does test other phases of the students' knowledge of Spanish. It predicts with reasonable accuracy the students' subsequent success in college courses of various types, and secondary-school students trained in the direct method, the grammar-translation method, or the reading method seem to do equally well, whatever kind of course they have had, provided that it is a genuine course in Spanish, with reasonably stiff standards, and not a series of cultural units, largely in English, about our Iberian or Southern American friends.

In fact, one of the chief virtues of the present test is precisely that it does not prescribe, that it does not require students to be trained in "free" composition or in the artificial arts of translation in either direction. It leaves the teacher free to plan his own course.

He need no longer coach them to pass College Board examinations or have an uneasy feeling that he is negligent if he fails to do so. He can, instead, and with much greater equanimity and self-respect, teach them Spanish, all the Spanish they can learn, using all the methods and approaches and objectives that he can apply or invent. And having done this, he can send his students in to the College Board test with confidence that they will have a chance to prove, in fair and open competition, their ability to learn and his to teach.



Stanley Wyatt, whose drawings illustrate this issue of the *Review*, welcomed 1952 by painting a human figure in violent proximity to a monster fish. "This," he wrote on the greeting card which bore the picture, "is me wrestling with my fate." How fate became fish was not explained, but the transformation was a tribute to the imagination of an artist who was brought up in Denver, far from whales, and is still

safely inland, in Pennsylvania, as assistant professor of art at Waynesburg College. "Any suggestions?" he wanted to know when asked to wrestle with the Spanish Test article. "You might try a feather rig with a 16/0 reel and No. 72 line," we replied hopefully.

# Essay vs. Objective Testing in Social Studies

*What is the case for and against the old essay tests and the new objective tests in the social studies? An exchange of views on this question between Arthur B. Darling of Phillips Academy, Andover, and Henry W. Bragdon of Phillips Exeter Academy, former chief examiner in Social Studies, is here excerpted from the March and December, 1951, issues of the New England Social Studies Bulletin.\**

## ECONOMY

*Mr. Darling:* Most of us remember when the Scholastic Aptitude Test joined the substantive examinations of the College Board in June—and then replaced them in April—at first merely to give the colleges some idea whether their applicants for scholarships would be capable of doing the work later to deserve that largesse. Some of us, in both college and school, are still dismayed that the substantive examinations in June at the close of the school year wilted so rapidly under the glare of the psychological investigation and soon passed out altogether. It was certainly not because school men and women wished to see them die.

There may have been reason for incorporating the aptitude and achievement test in the examining system of the College Board to assist the admissions officers and dispensers of scholarship aid. There appears to have been no good reason, save that of economy perhaps, for abandoning the substantive examinations. Any economies to persons and institutions were outweighed by distinct losses for both schools and colleges, losses which representatives of the College Board have recently been groping to recapture.

## USEFULNESS

*Mr. Darling:* College authorities have asserted that the aptitude and achievement tests enable them to determine what candidates will meet the standards of the college; the lowest proportion can be rejected with confidence that it is likely to include no person able to graduate if allowed to enter. Schoolmen will grant all of

## ECONOMY

*Mr. Bragdon:* Mr. Darling maintains that there was "no good reason, save that of economy perhaps, for abandoning the substantive examinations." Economy was surely a major reason, and in its own right a compelling one. The substantive examinations were expensive. In 1940, for instance, the cost of reading a single blue book in American history was \$1.18. The examination fee [which included all costs] was \$10.00. This occasioned no difficulty for a private school student who could easily afford the money and who was taking the test at his own school. But the arrangement was unfair to students from small towns, especially west of the Appalachians . . . [who] had not only to pay the fee but to bear the expense of travel to the nearest center and of living expenses during a testing period averaging four or five days.

Economy was by no means the only reason for abandoning the former substantive tests. The tests took so long to administer and required so much manpower to correct that they were given in June after most schools had closed for the summer. The results were not in the hands of the colleges until July, and applicants often did not learn their fate until August.

## USEFULNESS

*Mr. Bragdon:* Yet if the written substantive tests had great value, they were not without serious ill effects. About 1945 a pamphlet by college and school men on the teaching of English in secondary schools concluded that, "The

that, and still maintain that the method of testing applicants for college, without substantive examinations to accompany the screening for aptitude, works hardship upon school and college. This present method of testing sacrifices much of importance to them both.

#### ACCURACY

*Mr. Darling:* It has been asserted with equal conviction, and with some observation to support the statement, that today all a student needs in a Social Studies examination of the College Board is a pencil, eraser, and a coin; the machines will do the rest. Offered a choice among four or five propositions that are correct, nearly correct, possibly wrong, or frankly absurd, the student may not have to resort to the coin.

Nor is he obliged to do much else. His neuromuscular response hardly rises above a spinal ganglion. Should he venture to use the higher centers, search his material, winnow conflicting evidence, find the determinant among several variant factors, and reach a judgment, he may prove wiser than the machine. But he will be wrong to the statisticians of the Board, and therefore to the authorities in the college of his choice.

#### RESULT

*Mr. Darling:* This possibility is bad enough for the maintenance of continuity and for the improvement in social studies as youths in quest of education go from school to college. Even if it should not penalize capriciously, it gives no proper incentive or reward for any superiority which a student may have attained in one institution of learning before he proceeds to the other. What is worse, it strengthens no tie between the departments of the social studies in the two institutions.

For the schools, there is no external check worth the name upon the content of their courses or upon the performance of their instructors. This valuable check the old College

definite entrance requirements of the colleges and the examinations based upon them. . . (tended) to highly formal and profitless methods of instruction." It was standard operating procedure. . . to push along rapidly in order to finish covering new ground by May 1. Then began what was often a deadly-dull and stultifying business [of cramming by using old examination questions].

#### ACCURACY

*Mr. Bragdon:* Obviously this is not to be taken too seriously, but it may interest readers to know the specific measures taken to avoid "frankly absurd" answers, to raise the "neuromuscular response . . . above a spinal ganglion," and to try to prevent a student from being "wiser than the machine."

All questions are pre-tested on a large and representative group of students, and the results are subject to careful analysis. A wrong answer so patently absurd that it is selected by few or no students is eliminated and a more plausible one invented. As regards the neuromuscular response, those who make up the test have constantly been aware of two common weaknesses of objective type tests: they often test only canned knowledge, and they tend to favor the facile guesser. Therefore, not more than one-quarter of the test is the usual one-out-of-five multiple choice. Throughout the test is an attempt to make success depend on understanding rather than on mere rote-knowledge, and an attempt to devise some questions requiring a fairly high level of grasp of ideas and relationships, as well as an ability to *stay with* the question until the student sees light. In fact, although I prefer the essay type examination and seldom use anything else in teaching, I think that a high grade in the present Social Studies Test requires a higher level of ability than in the former essay type.

#### RESULT

*Mr. Bragdon:* As regards its basic purpose—predicting success in college—the Social Stud-

Board examinations afforded, with effectiveness in maintaining standards and some uniformity in the preparatory schools of this country. For the colleges, little information is accumulated with regard to the exceptional materials which some of their freshmen may have ready for their professors to build upon.

#### AND CONSIDERATION

*Mr. Darling:* It would seem poor technique indeed to invite boredom and inattention by ignoring the fact that many in the audience may already understand what the teacher is expatiating. In addition to accepting the results of the aptitude test for admission, the colleges might profitably conduct anticipatory examinations to find what their exceptional students may have brought with their luggage, and place them accordingly in special classes or advanced courses. This adjustment should not be thrown back upon the secondary school, to determine in advance for the college. The ratings and recommendations of the school should be taken into consideration, but the decisions should be made by the college itself.

It is not fitting to charge that those who find the college class dull should not have been trained so well in preparatory school. One cannot get too much preparation for the best that college has to offer. The appropriate inference is not that the school teachers should ease the process of intellectual discipline. It is that the college authorities should invite the college professor to examine his own duffel. At least the better informed members of his class might be gathered in another division of the course in which he could dispense with repetition. This simple action alone will go far toward closing the rift between the social studies of the schools and of the colleges.

ies Test seems fairly successful. A very early form of the test, which takes one hour, was slightly better than the three-hour test in American History in predicting success in three introductory social studies courses at Harvard. Results at other colleges have corroborated those at Harvard. Based for the most part on knowledge students acquire in standard courses, the test nevertheless puts the material in new juxtaposition to see whether a student has really grasped the knowledge to which he has been exposed. It tries, as has been often said, to provide a "snapshot" rather than a "posed portrait." The private schools have therefore been deprived of much of the advantage they used to enjoy through more intensive training along clearly defined paths. For some years the average score of public and private school students has been almost exactly the same. As regards predictability . . . the former test relatively favored the hard-working, not-too-bright "late-blooming serious."

#### AND CONSIDERATION

*Mr. Bragdon:* I must finally agree with Mr. Darling's contention that under the old dispensation there was a closer tie between schools and colleges. The schools knew what was expected of them; the colleges knew what to expect. There has been a further loosening of the ties because the colleges are drawing students from wider areas. In addition, released of an external check, schools are following their own lines. Whether these deviations from a norm are good or bad I do not know. I do, however, strongly agree that the business of creating better understanding and a closer communication between school and college is a major problem of social studies teaching.

\* Space permitting, the *Review* would have printed the articles in whole and added its own comments. However, it should at least be mentioned that the essay tests had declined in use when they were discontinued. Mr. Bragdon points out in a part of his article not here reprinted that Pearl Harbor delivered the *coup de grace* to a dying institution, the number of candidates taking the history examinations having dropped from 6,788 in 1932 to 3,600 in 1941. It should also be pointed out that the present test is a substantive (or achievement) test, not an aptitude test, although some measure of the one always enters into a test of the other. For a description of the test, see the *Bulletin of Information*.



## Multiple Choice

(Continued from page 242)

that with such efforts and progress as the Board is making, it will always have the admiring support of those of us who know how often the labors of Hercules are performed offstage.

Edward T. Hall  
Assistant Headmaster

Saint Mark's School  
Southborough, Mass.

### Early Identification of Talent

I have been looking over the 1950 *Report of the Director of the College Entrance Examination Board* and was particularly struck by some things expressed by Mr. Bowles in his statement, "The Future of the Board," on page 48.

The thing that I have been unusually interested in is the identification of college candidates and the giving of these potentially good students a motive that will be strong enough to lead them to make some effort to get into college. I have been particularly disturbed by the seeming lack of motivation and feel that in this area the high school guidance people have a lot to do.

The point of this letter, however, is to ask you whether the Board has done any tenth grade testing for the purpose of identifying college material and, if it has, has it been in certain selected schools or on a state-wide basis. Since Mr. Bowles mentions the ability of the Board to carry out such a testing program, I am wondering just what has been done or what is contemplated in this field.

Paul H. Farrier  
Director of Admissions

Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
Blacksburg, Va.

• Although the Board does not, as yet, have a program for the early identification of potential college candidates, such a project, combined with the testing of eighth, ninth, and tenth grade students and a guidance program directed at both parents and students, is suggested in the *Report* as a worth-while controlled experiment. It is pointed out that such early identification would reveal students of ability who, under the present primary emphasis on twelfth grade candidates, are unknown because they take non-college preparatory courses, drop out, or decide early in school that they will not go to college.

Moving in good company—some 600 volumes submitted by 127 publishers—the *College Handbook* has been named one of the "Fifty Books of the Year" by the American Institute of Graphic Arts, which will exhibit the winners in New York and other large cities before sending them on tour throughout the country.

### Gilmore's Research

The article, "A New Venture in the Testing of Motivation," by John V. Gilmore is indeed an interesting and challenging study. Understanding the importance of parent-child interactions appears to be a "must" for the classroom teacher if the concept of the child as an individual is to be given its true meaning.

I should like to ask permission to reprint the above-mentioned article as part of our in-service training program in the public schools of Detroit Lakes.

Richard F. Wollin  
Detroit Lakes, Minn.

For several years I have been interested in testing as a tool in guidance for prognostic purposes. Many times my colleague and I wished there was a method whereby an individual's will to do could be measured. Consequently, when I noticed the article, "A New Venture in the Testing of Motivation," in the recent issue [November] of the *College Board Review*, I was very much interested.

After having read the article, I felt moved to attempt to get it into the hands of some of the parents of our students. First I considered copying only portions of the article, but after further thinking on the matter, I decided to have the entire article mimeographed. I did not want to run the risk of any misunderstanding as a result of taking parts out of their context.

It is my humble opinion that this article should be helpful to the parents of every child. I am frequently in contact with parents about the accomplishments of their children and plan to make Professor Gilmore's article available to as many as possible as the opportunity presents itself.

D. C. MacMurray  
Assistant Principal

Passaic Valley High School  
Little Falls, N. J.



## Board Publications

*Annual Report of the Director, 1950.* Description of Board activities, lists of members, examiners, readers. Contains a section, "Data for Interpreting the Tests." 83 pages. \$.50.

*Bulletin of Information and Sample Tests.* Advice to candidates and parents, dates of examinations, registration and fees, description of tests, sample questions. 56 pages. Free.

*College Board Review.* News and research of the College Entrance Examination Board. Subscription: one year, \$.50; two years, \$1. Extra copies, when available, are \$.25 each, six for \$1. Special prices for larger orders.

*College Handbook.* Descriptions of each of the 134 member colleges—their study programs, admission terms, freshman year expenses, scholarships and other aid, and to whom to write for information. A special section on national scholarship programs. Also, listings of colleges by sex of students, region and enrollment, and a table of Army, Navy, and Air R.O.T.C. units. 292 pages. \$1.

*The College Board, Its First Fifty Years,* by Claude M. Fuess. "The full story of the College Entrance Examination Board's contribution to twentieth-century education in America." Published by Columbia University Press, New York, 1950. 224 pages. \$2.75.

Order from the Secretary, College Entrance Examination Board, 425 West 117 Street, New York 27, N. Y.

## Dates, Tests, Fees: 1952

### EXAMINATION DATES

March 15, 1952

May 17, 1952

August 13, 1952

December 6, 1952

### EXAMINATION PROGRAMS\*

#### *Morning Program*

Scholastic Aptitude Test  
(Verbal Section)  
(Mathematical Section)

#### *Afternoon Program*

(a maximum of three afternoon tests)

English Composition	Chemistry
Social Studies	Physics
French Reading	Intermediate
German Reading	Mathematics
Latin Reading	Advanced
Spanish Reading	Mathematics
Biology	Spatial Relations
Pre-Engineering Science Comprehension	

### EXAMINATION FEES

Morning Program and	
Afternoon Program . . . . .	\$12
Morning Program only . . . . .	6
Afternoon Program only . . . . .	8

\* The College Transfer Test, for students transferring from one college to another, is offered on the same dates and at the same centers as the College Entrance Tests. It is administered in the morning. The fee is \$6. Bulletins of Information and application blanks for the College Transfer Test will be sent upon request. Address the College Entrance Examination Board, Box 592, Princeton, N. J., or Box 9896, Los Feliz Station, Los Angeles 27, Cal.

